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A system and method for automatically generating URLs which reference one or more data sources or data targets connected to a computer. The data sources/targets may be of any type including files, http servers, ftp servers, hardware devices, etc. The generated URLs may be used together with a system such as the Data Socket system to seamlessly read data from disparate data source types or write data to disparate data target types without having to manually perform configuration, connection operations, data format conversion, etc. The URLs are generated automatically and contain all the information necessary for accessing the data source/target. This greatly abstracts a user or application from the I/O process.